



An Organisation for Promoting  
Understanding of Society

## LISTENING POST

### South Italy (Lamezia Terme/Calabria) at the Dawn of 2019

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#### **PART 1: THE SHARING OF PREOCCUPATIONS AND EXPERIENCES**

*In this part, the Listening Post participants were invited to identify, contribute, and explore their experiences in their various social roles, be they: in work, unemployed or retired; as members of religious, political, neighbourhood, voluntary or leisure organisations; or as members of families and communities. This part was largely concerned with what might be called, 'the stuff of people's everyday lives': the 'socio' or 'external' world of participants.*

This year 11 people took part in Listening post (the fifteenth that we perform in Calabria). The age group of the participants is very young between 22 and 32 years. Four of them has a permanent contract, others work precariously, others are looking for a job, one of them is still completing university studies. The professional activities are different: social and health workers, environmental and cultural operators. The group consists of 8 women and 3 men. This is the first experience in Listening post for everybody.

The Listening started about 12 minutes late; a person arrives after 20 minutes. We have recovered the delay time by shortening the pause. In the second part of the meeting, the participants were divided into three groups in order to choose the main themes that then they were shared with the whole group. It was necessary to explain the choices to understand which were the most important ones.

Everyone took part in the discussion in the different phases, except one person remained silent in the third phase. Participation was active and the confrontation was very animated. At the end of the meeting, almost everyone intervened to underline how they were feel in this event and they shared the interest for this kind of reflection and comparison with themselves and with others.

#### **PART 2: IDENTIFICATION OF MAJOR THEMES**

*In Part 2, the aim collectively was to identify the major themes emerging from Part 1.*

##### **1) Environment and lifestyle**

Several young participants expressed their concerns about the environment in a general way.

They recognize an indifference and negligence by the people towards the environment, specifically with regard to nature, about trees and fruits. The problem of air pollution was highlighted (for example ILVA di Bari), solid waste like plastics filled in the seas and beaches, etc., "... the sense of love is lost ..." understood as care and attention for people, nature, things, "... different people are not interested for the environment where they live ...".

There was a reflection between past and present, talking about once the situation was not like this, "... there was not a lot of trash ..." and in particular, all people were more respectful of their places of life.

Today, unfortunately, capitalism and consumerism have changed the lifestyles of people and entire nations, because companies interested in the market are more inclined to destroy than to build and develop sustainable economies. The lifestyle of people, often devoted to uncontrolled expenses and degenerative for the environment, has changed and only the possibility of having clear directives of government could cause a change of course. "Today we want everything immediately ... for example (products) disposable ...", today speed predominates in many areas and contexts.

## **2) To remain or to go away from Calabria**

This is the main theme felt by all the participants because the group consisted essentially of young Calabrians in working age. The general concerns were for the depopulation of the population in Calabria the absence of serious policies regarding work, environment and social sector. However the concerns that emerged with great intensity have affected the individual and collective sphere was the choice to stay or leave Calabria. One participant clearly said: "My concern is to remain alone on my land. Seeing friends go away is so sad. Really sad. "

Someone specifies that staying in Calabria there could be amazing because it is possible to have many things to do and to innovate more than in other places: "but there is a lot to do ... I do more things here than when I was in Rome. Here I have to invent things ... here I like it because I have to invent myself, but if there is not a cheering group". Participants recognize the spaces and opportunities to create and promote, but you can do nothing alone. Some other participants note that there is "lack of vision in the action". We could do many things but we lack the ability to see ourselves able in first person to be promoters: "we do not think ourselves like the founders of action. "Why cannot I a promoter of little operation?". Someone else underlines a difficult and patient construction of design paths. "We are in a hurry to reach our goals and we do not know how to get it. It is necessary care, exercise, effort to get important dreams. This needs time. We have to accept the slowness of the construction ". In addition, maybe there is a bet, a challenge to not stop our project, to have the ability to invest from our resources: "The courage to try. At least I tried it".

## **3) Educational poverty, culture and social**

Among other concerns, is strongly emerging the problem of an educational and cultural weakening, now more than ever.

The first accuse was for the school. It has to be able to build different educational and cultural bases, giving guidelines to young people in this particular climate of change: "... the school should do more in educational terms ... "; "We can't delegate at the school the whole education, but deal with the educational issue on several fronts".

A strong loss of sense of community and sharing has caused a greater development of individualism and the inability to stay together in diversity and collaboration.

Social media and other current communication tools are seen with fear and concern for the disproportionate use of today. They worried about the way they are used because they bring too often a high level of cultural disinformation, fake news and / or information, emulation among young people of self-harmer behavior, diffusion of homophobic and racist thoughts.

Social media emphasize information and minimize the severity of some facts at the same time.

For many it is clear evidence of a high degree of ignorance due to lack of insights and reading. Not reading means not being able to develop critical sense and a bad communication involves the proliferation and spread of false information. "Today communication is a virus. People talks through slogans. It has become a dangerous instrument".

#### **4) Racism and Security**

Racism is a topic of great concern and bewilderment. While saying that racism has always been here, however today it is legitimized as something to be proud of. The climate of hatred and discrimination is spreading, not only in Italy, but also in several European countries and beyond. Now a kind of racism against migrants, but which in reality it can always be directed towards someone else: from the Rom people to the autistic child. It is widespread thinking that "... someone wants to take away our few things". This fear is encouraged in people, often it is a war between poor people. In particular is serious and dangerous that this fear is intentionally fueled by a political area in Italy. Because the Italian politicians do not give attention to the job and it makes many people unsafe. Work is not on the government agenda. They are discussing the citizen's basic income and not real job. However, we know is work that gives dignity to people. Someone explicitly: "I'm worried about guilty ignorance", meaning so the condition where it is not necessary to choose, for many it is "easier not to choose". Many follow the thought expressed by the Minister of the Interior, Matteo Salvini, without being able to argue and express themselves with rational contents and thoughts. As well, the concept of security is conceived in the distorted ways of Salvini, "the concept of security cannot be how Salvini thinks it". The participants believe that the security vision is anything than what is expressed in the government's decrees.

### **PART 3: ANALYSIS AND HYPOTHESIS FORMATION**

*In Part 3, the participants were working with the information resulting from Parts 1 & 2, with a view to collectively identifying the underlying dynamics both conscious and unconscious that may be predominant at the time; and developing hypotheses as to why they might be occurring at that moment. Here, participants were working more with what might be called their 'psycho' or 'internal' world: their collective ideas and ways of thinking that both determine how they perceive the external realities and shape their actions towards them.*

#### **Analysis and Hypothesis 1: "Beyond speed limits"**

**Analysis:** Starting from a careful and depth reflection, the theme of speed, of haste, of having a social position or be the first to do things (for example communicating, finding a job, etc.), returns several times. The topic of the "speed" is connected to the environment (pollution and climate changes), to the culture of the disposable (consumerism), to wanting everything immediately (to acquire a high work position immediately), to wanting to learn information in instantaneous way (social network) and to pretending to learn without effort (to study only necessary), etc. In young people, projected fully and actively in society, there is a strong concern that we don't dedicate much time " to build " durable and positive project, to lay the foundations for managing change with care and attention, to be more able to express critical and constructive thoughts. Bauman talked about liquid society, today, more than ever, we could talk about a gaseous society, connected but at the same time inconsistent, impalpable society, based on virtual competences and thoughts.

**Hypothesis: If the concern is the speed, from this time that flows inexorably and crosses the different areas of life (work, education, communication, technology, etc.), it means that there are difficulties that men have to face constantly and often lead them beyond their limits (physical and psychic limits). If this is, people lives a condition with a sense of fear and inadequacy.**

#### **Analysis and Hypothesis 2: "Scattered and dispersed"**

**Analysis:** An expressed concern is to remain alone in a city and to feel unable to create and implement projects due to the lack of the peer group. Because this generation had difficulty in assuming responsibility of conceiving, innovating, founding. They look for a group component to think promoting, generating, producing. At the same time it is difficult "to be community", developing collaboration and participation's processes able to put together competences and responsibilities with the people that living in the same city for the solution of problems.

**Hypothesis: If the concern is to remain alone and at the same time to be aware of individual actions, it means that we have so many resources "scattered and dispersed", a continuous research of collective creative actions able to direct in the same direction to becoming a network.**

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